

**A CITIZEN'S GUIDE  
TO  
CODE COMPLIANCE**



**CODE COMPLIANCE DIVISION**

**Phone: (305) 622-8020**

**Fax: (305) 622-8855**



## **City of Miami Gardens Code Compliance**

### **Mission Statement**

The City will deliver superior services designed to enhance public safety and quality of life while exercising good stewardship through open government and active civic, business and resident involvement.

Miami Gardens is and will be a vibrant and diverse City with a strong sense of community ownership, civic pride, abundant employment opportunities, and cultural and leisure activities for its residents. We will provide continued economic viability through planned, responsible and sustainable growth and redevelopment.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

PREFACE ..... 4

CH. 1 WHAT IS CODE COMPLIANCE ..... 5

CH. 2 COMMON CODE VIOLATIONS ..... 6

CH. 3 INSPECTION PROCESS ..... 11

CH. 4 LIEN AMNESTY PROGRAM ..... 12

CH. 5 SPECIAL MASTER HEARING PROCESS ..... 13

CH. 6 CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ..... 14

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Code Compliance Division  
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April 2010

**EDITOR’S NOTE: IMPORTANT**

The information in this Guide is intended only as a general summary of Code regulations. It is not intended as a substitute for the Miami Gardens Code of Ordinances.

Residents are encouraged to contact the Code Compliance Division at (305) 622-8020 regarding specific ordinance requirements.



# CODE COMPLIANCE

## PREFACE

The concept of Code Compliance is relatively new. In 1980, the State of Florida passed a law outlining the code compliance process. The idea was to take the enforcement of local ordinances out of the state court system and have violations handled by local code compliance officers and an administrative process established by the municipality. When the City of Miami Gardens was established, we established such a system.

The City's code enforcement philosophy is that compliance is our primary goal and education is the key to reaching this goal. One of the greatest obstacles to gaining compliance is that many citizens do not realize that they are violating local ordinances. For instance, it is not at all unusual for a resident to be unaware that parking a vehicle on the swale without a valid tag, or parking an inoperable vehicle on your private property, violates city ordinances. Most people are willing to play by the rules if they know the rules.

Property maintenance laws are designed to promote neighborhood integrity, prevent property value decline, reduce visual clutter and blight, and preserve quality of life.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

The purpose of this guide is to educate the residents of Miami Gardens about the Code Compliance process. It is intended only as a general summary of code regulations and is not intended as a substitute for the actual City of Miami Gardens Code of Ordinances.

For specific ordinance requirements, residents should contact the Code Compliance Division at (305) 622-8020 or visit the City's website at: **[www.miamigardens-fl.gov](http://www.miamigardens-fl.gov)** and click on ordinances.

## CHAPTER ONE

### WHAT IS CODE COMPLIANCE?

State building codes were created to protect our health, safety and welfare by ensuring that buildings are properly constructed. Additionally, local ordinances exist to protect our health, quality of life, and property values. The Code Compliance Division serves our citizens by enforcing these codes.

The City of Miami Gardens Code Compliance Division is committed to maintaining the health, safety and quality of life for our residents and business owners. The code compliance process regulates certain aspects of the building code (e.g. unsafe structures), zoning code (e.g. property uses and setbacks) and minimum housing standards.



*Example of a well maintained single family home*



*Example of a poorly maintained home with several code violations*



## CHAPTER TWO

### COMMON CODE VIOLATIONS

#### STORAGE OF JUNK, TRASH, DEBRIS AND OTHER MATERIALS

It is a violation of city code to store junk, trash, debris, on your property. **The proper way to dispose of trash is to contact Miami Dade Solid Waste at 311 to schedule a pickup before you place trash on your swale.** A violation will not be issued if the Code Compliance Division can verify that you have a County pick-up number with a scheduled solid waste pickup.



*Violation*



*Compliance*

#### OVERGROWTH OF GRASS, WEEDS AND LANDSCAPING

The City code provides that grass cannot grow to a height of over 8 inches on your property. It should be noted that the swale or road right-of-way in front or on the side of your property is your responsibility to maintain. Generally, it is recommended that homeowners mow and edge their lawns every 2-3 weeks during the winter months and every 1-2 weeks during the summer.



*Violation*



*Compliance*

# City of Miami Gardens Code Compliance Division

## AUTO REPAIR WORK

It is a violation to conduct auto repair work in a residential area unless it is minor and short term in nature. Short term is a period not exceeding 24 hours.



*Violation*

## JUNK AND ABANDONED VEHICLES

Storage of any wrecked, dismantled, partially dismantled, inoperable or recreational vehicle, trailer, boat or special purpose vehicle is prohibited.

A vehicle is considered inoperable if it is being stored or parked without having all wheels mounted and all tires inflated, or if it does not have a current license tag on the vehicle.



*Violation*



*Compliance*



## MINIMUM STANDARD FOR DWELLINGS

All properties in the City of Miami Gardens must be maintained in good condition. This includes:

- No broken windows or doors.
- The roof must be structurally sound and in good condition.
- The dwelling must meet minimum standards for space, light, and ventilation.
- Basic sanitary facilities and equipment must be in working order.
- All structures must be painted and kept free of weathering, discoloration, mold, mildew and graffiti.



*Violation*



*Violation*



*Compliance*



## STORAGE / PARKING OF COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

Trucks classified as commercial vehicles are prohibited from parking in residential areas. This includes vehicles that display externally stored or mounted equipment either in a fixed or temporary manner.

Buses, tractor-trailers and wreckers are also prohibited.



*Prohibited*



*Prohibited*

**All recreational vehicles, boats and utility trailers must be parked or stored in the side yard behind the front building line of the property or in the rear yard, if accessible.** These kinds of vehicles cannot be parked in a residential area if the height exceeds 13 feet 6 inches or exceeds 24 feet in length.

Only one recreational vehicle and one boat can be parked or stored on a residential property.

No boat shall exceed 24 feet in length or 8½ feet in width.



*Violation*



*Compliance*



## BUILDING PERMITS

Permits are required for most construction work. For example, permits are required for fence construction, shed installation, screen enclosures, installation of a patio slab, gazebos, roofs, room additions, docks, and seawalls. Many interior alterations also require a permit such as electrical wiring, drywall, plumbing changes, water heater installations, doors and windows to name a few. Please contact the Building Services Division at (305) 622-8027 before commencing construction to determine whether a permit is required.

## TREE REMOVAL

In many cases, a permit is required for tree removal in residential areas. Also, major trimming of a tree also requires a permit under certain circumstances. Please contact the Code Compliance Division at (305) 622-8020 before performing any tree removal.

## SIDEWALKS DRIVEWAY APPROACHES AND SWALES

Although the approach in front of your property is on the City's right-of-way, it is the duty of the owner of a property abutting the public streets to maintain the swale and to repair the driveway and approach when needed. The Public Works Department can provide the specifications to correctly install or repair an approach. Some approach repairs may not require a permit but installation of a new approach will require a permit. Please contact the Public Works Department at (305) 622-8004 before installing or repairing a driveway or approach.



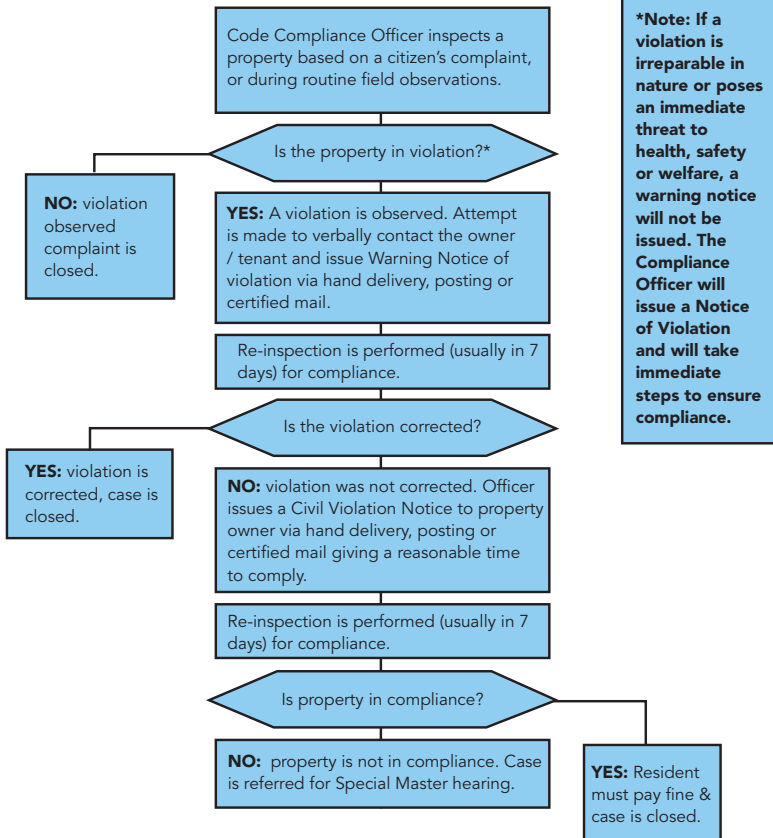
*Example of a deteriorated approach*



*Example of a well maintained approach and swale*

## CHAPTER THREE

### INSPECTION PROCESS



The length of time required to complete the inspection process and to achieve compliance varies. If the violation remains uncorrected and is subsequently scheduled before the Special Master, it could result in the recordation of a lien against the property.

The City may foreclosure on liens recorded against the property for the nonpayment of fines under certain circumstances. It is important to note that the City's overall goal is to achieve compliance. With your cooperation, we can achieve this goal.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### LIEN AMNESTY PROGRAM

By working together with property owners, the City's Code Compliance Division has brought numerous properties into compliance. However, many properties had to be taken through the progressive enforcement process which resulted in violation notices, fines and liens.

Given the current economic climate, the City established the Lien Amnesty Program which allows individuals with past fines to voluntarily pay 5% of the accumulated lien or amount or \$250 whichever is greater (plus administrative fees and/or hard costs). The applicant must first correct the conditions that triggered the initial violation notice(s). The goal of this program is to assist property owners with their efforts to achieve compliance during this period of economic uncertainty.

In order to take advantage of the Lien Amnesty Program, property owners should take the following steps:

**Step One:** Submit a Lien Amnesty Application if your property has outstanding liens and is currently in compliance.



**Step Two:** Code Compliance will review the application, confirm compliance, and provide the property owner with the total amount due.



**Step Three:** An Affidavit of Compliance is issued, the property owner satisfies (pays) the lien and the lien is released.

**NOTE:** The Lien Amnesty Program is a temporary program which is subject to end without notice.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SPECIAL MASTER HEARING PROCESS**

The Special Master hearing process is a quasi-judicial process.

The Special Master is a licensed attorney appointed by the City Council to serve as an independent, third-party administrative hearing judge.

Code Compliance hearings are scheduled for the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. Hearings are conducted much like court proceedings with testimony and evidence presented by both the City (Code Compliance Officer) and the respondent (property owner).

The Special Master makes a finding of fact based on the evidence and determines whether the alleged violation did occur, and whether the person named in the civil violation notice is legally responsible for the violation.

If the decision of the Special Master affirms the Code Compliance Officer's determination of violation, then penalties may be imposed.

Any fines or penalties imposed may be recorded as a lien against all real property. Unpaid liens could result in a foreclosure or action for a money judgement.



## CHAPTER SIX

### CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

The involvement of individual homeowners and crime watch and other neighborhood organizations is important to the success of code compliance and our efforts to make Miami Gardens a first class city.

#### HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

##### **1. Report violations in your neighborhood:**

- Call the Code Compliance Division to make a complaint at (305) 622-8020 or visit our office at 1515 NW 167 Street Bldg.5, Suite 200. You may remain anonymous.

##### **2. Invite the Code Compliance Division to your next neighborhood association meeting or community event to educate and disseminate information to your neighbors:**

- Contact our office at (305) 622-8020 and ask for a Code Compliance Supervisor.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

City of Miami Gardens Code Compliance . . . . .	305 622-8020
City of Miami Gardens Public Works . . . . .	305 622-8004
City of Miami Gardens Building Services . . . . .	305 622-8027
City of Miami Gardens Planning & Zoning . . . . .	305 622-8023
City of Miami Gardens Police Department. . . . .	305 474-6473
City of Miami Gardens Parks Department . . . . .	305 622-8080
City of Miami Gardens Community Development . . . . .	305 622-8041
City of Miami Gardens City Hall Main Line. . . . .	305 622-8000
Miami Dade County Government Services . . . . .	311



City of Miami Gardens  
Code Compliance  
1515 NW 167th Street  
Bldg. 5, Suite 200  
Miami Gardens, FL 33169

# Compliance and Education is our Goal

## Mayor & City Council

Shirley Gibson, Mayor  
Aaron Campbell Jr., Vice-Mayor  
Melvin L. Bratton, Council Member  
Oliver G. Gilbert III, Council Member  
Sharon Pritchett, Council Member  
Barbara Watson, Council Member  
André Williams, Council Member

## City Administration

Dr. Danny O. Crew, City Manager  
Sonja K. Dickens, City Attorney  
Ronetta Taylor, City Clerk

## Building and Code Compliance Department

Sharon Ragoonan,  
Building and Code Compliance Director  
Roderick Potter,  
Code Compliance Division Director  
Shellie Ransom,  
Building Services Division Director